Monday, April 20, 2009 ★ 7 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 131 P18

Can education lure you to Singapore? **LEARNING** / E1

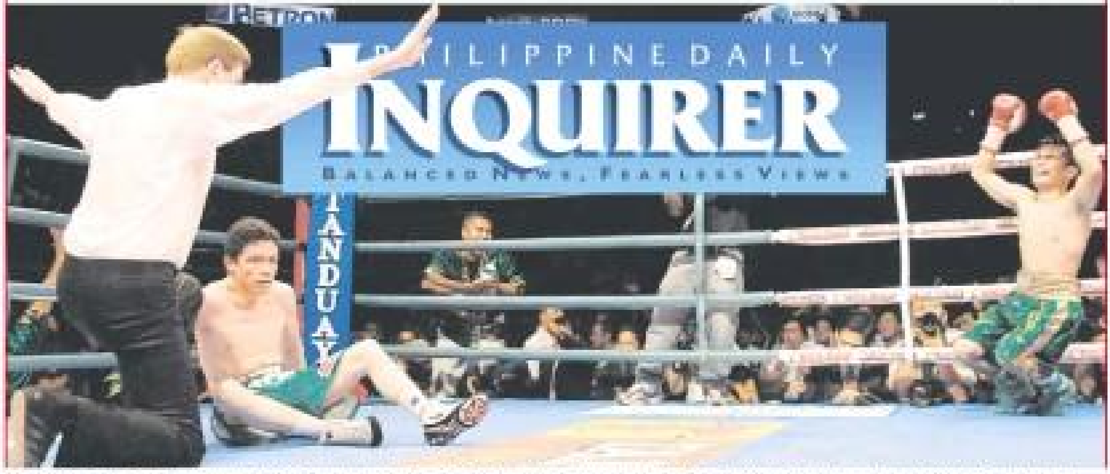
Maynilad, Manila Water scrap rate hike plans **BUSINESS** / B1

Cebuano transsexual's award-winning movie rocks **ENTERTAINMENT** / D1

Obama administration to boycott UN racism meet **WORLD** / A32

Sweating buckets? Blame it on high humidity **NEWS** / A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



DETHRONED Referee Bruce McTavish counts out IBF light flyweight champion Ulises Solis of Mexico who received a crushing blow from Brian Viloria (right) in the 11th round, giving the title to the Filipino boxing star.

Day of knockouts for RP

Donaire, Viloria stop foes in world title fights

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PUNCHES LANDED AS PROMISED.

World flyweight champion Nonito Donaire Jr. yesterday knocked down Mexican challenger Raul Martinez four times to keep his IBO/IBF titles by technical knockout in the fourth round at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

And former World Boxing Council champion Brian "The Hawaiian Punch" Viloria was just as impressive, knocking out Mexican Ulises Solis with a crushing right to the jaw in the 11th round to wrest the IBF light flyweight crown.

The sensational victories before a huge crowd at the Big Dome thrilled a nation that is hoping for, if not anticipating, a similar outcome when its top boxing star, Manny Pacquiao, faces Briton Ricky Hatton on May 2 in Las Vegas.

Donaire's and Viloria's triumphs crowned an explosive morning for Filipino boxers, who scored four knockouts against foreign opponents. In the undercard, Rodel "Denver" Cuello stopped Hiroshi Matsumoto of Japan in four rounds to capture the WBC international minimum weight title, while super flyweight Drian Francisco hammered

DAY OF KNOCKOUTS A22



MEXICAN challenger Raul Martinez drops to the floor in a quick fourth-round loss to Filipino world flyweight champion Nonito Donaire Jr.

1,000 gov't troops ring Abu Sayyaf stronghold

By the Inquirer Staff

THE GOVERNMENT HAS DEPLOYED more troops to help secure the release of a kidnapped Italian aid worker amid concerns for his health, officials said yesterday.

Police and armed villagers found Swiss Andreas Notter on Saturday walking with a cane near a road in the Indanan forest on Jolo Island, after he apparently escaped or was abandoned by his Abu Sayyaf captors, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said.

The Abu Sayyaf kidnappers freed Filipino Mary Jean Lacaba on April 2.

Italian Eugenio Vagni, the last of the three International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workers who were seized on Jan. 15, remains in the hands of the gunmen in Indanan.

"The fact that he's struggling with hypertension and a hernia is a red flag for us," Teodoro told The Associated Press. "We're moving with a sense of immediacy and intensifying our efforts to secure his freedom as soon as possible."

More than 1,000 Marines, police and armed village guards will continue to surround the kidnappers' stronghold to exert pressure on them, while a group of Muslim clerics tries to negotiate his release, Teodoro said.

1,000 GOV'T A20

Ex-vigilantes linked officials to slays—CHR

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—FORMER HIT men of the so-called Davao Death Squad have linked some government officials to the operation of the shadowy group blamed for a wave of summary executions in this southern Philippine city, Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Leila de Lima said.

De Lima said the CHR had talked privately with "insiders"

EX-VIGILANTES A11

Whistle-blowers pin hopes on 2010 polls

By Leila B. Salaverria

PERHAPS NOBODY IS BANKING on the 2010 elections as much as this group.

For members of the Whistle-blowers Association, the changing of the guard is a personal concern.

It symbolizes not only a fresh start for the government to improve itself, but also a chance to rebuild lives that turned topsy-turvy when they decided to expose irregularities and corruption.

In the meantime, they are lending a helping hand to each other as they try to turn a new leaf and battle demoralization, frustration and problems like lack of money for food and medicine. One thing they don't feel, though, is regret.

The Whistleblowers Association is composed of different people whose common denominator is their decision to spill the beans on anomalous practices of public officials of the Arroyo administration.

It is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and headed by Sandra Cam, a confessed "jueteng" bag woman who linked President Macapagal-Arroyo's son to the illegal numbers game.

"The group provides a shoul-

WHISTLE-BLOWERS A21

Remittances slump a slow-burning fuse

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

AT A FORUM WITH LOCAL businessmen on Friday, Bert Hofman, World Bank country director, warned that the global financial crisis could have a more devastating impact on the remittances of Filipino workers than the Philippines cared to admit.

Without accusing the Arroyo administration of turning a blind eye on the worsening slump in remittances, he said that the World Bank was "far more pessimistic" about the Philippines' economic growth prospects than the government was, amid signs that the global recession would take longer than earlier expected.

"The longer the global recession lasts, the more the risks of large-scale return of migrants," he said. Many of the millions of Filipinos who had found work overseas might lose their jobs and be forced to return home.

He expressed doubts that al-

REMITTANCES A21

12,000 cops, soldiers bought Legacy plans

MORE THAN 12,000 POLICE officers and soldiers had bought preneed plans from and paid close to P320 million to the now collapsed Legacy Group of Companies, Sen. Mar Roxas said yesterday.

The preneed plans of personnel in uniform are expected to be taken up at today's resumption of the inquiry into the troubled preneed industry by the

12,000 COPS A20



SISTER Amabile assists an Italian boy under her care in a house of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in L'Aquila in central Italy.

28 RP nuns seek help from quake-torn Italy

By Cynthia D. Balana

FOR MOST OF THEIR LIVES, the 28 Filipino nuns who survived the 6.3-magnitude earthquake in L'Aquila in central Italy had attended to people who needed help, alleviating their pain and suffering.

Now it's their turn. While they escaped the quake that devastated both ancient and modern buildings in the medieval city of L'Aquila on April 6, they lost all their belongings as well as the roof over their heads.

Before the tragedy, the nuns lived in different houses of their religious congregation, Zelatrix Sisters of the Sacred Heart of

28 RP NUNS A22



'Scuba rice' grows in flood-prone areas

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—THE International Rice Research Institute (Irri) is banking on "scuba rice" to keep Filipino farmers' hopes afloat even through an increasingly unpredictable climate.

Set to be released to pilot farms nationwide this coming wet season, scuba rice refers to varieties

SCUBA RICE A20

Second FrontPage

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

7 17 22 32 41 49

P16,000,000.00

CHR to probe cops in Failon case

Told to explain 'excessive' force; Ted, kin to have statements taken

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (CHR) has begun looking into complaints that the Quezon City police used excessive force when they arrested the in-laws and household help of broadcaster Ted Failon on Thursday, allegedly for obstructing the investigation into the shooting of his wife Trinidad Etong.

Review TV footage

Flowers for Trina

Computer reenactment

Monday press conference

How to tell if it was suicide: NBI bares probe techniques

Statement analysis

Check validity of note

There's always a motive

Explore all angles

Biazon denies blaming GMA

SEN. RODOLFO BIAZON YESTERDAY SAID he never insinuated that President Macapagal-Arroyo may have been responsible for the recent crash of a presidential helicopter in Ifugao that killed eight of her aides.

Biazon said he was surprised by Press Secretary Cerge Remonde's statement the other day that he and his son, Muntinlupa Rep. Ruffy Biazon, had made such an insinuation. He said they had only sought to find out who ordered the helicopter to fly from Baguio to Ifugao in the afternoon of April 7.

In a phone interview, Biazon said three agencies had direct control of the ill-fated flight—the Presidential Security Group, the Presidential Wing Command under Brig. Gen. Atilo Yan, and the Presidential Management Staff.

He said these agencies should explain why the chopper was allowed to take off in disregard of two existing policies.

These were the policies concerning tandem flights, or two helicopters flying together, as well as a time-of-day restriction, according to Biazon, who served as Armed Forces chief of staff in the Aquino administration.

Biazon said tandem flights were a "must," especially for long-distance flights, and flights in uncertain weather and over difficult terrain, such as mountainous areas and insurgent-affected regions.

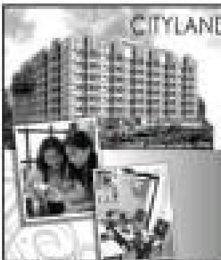
Christine O. Avendaño

Sweating buckets? Blame high humidity

No word on nuptials but Mar takes Korina to clan reunion

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

[illegible]













Erap gets one birthday wish

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Use of case number baffles Marcos victims

By Philip C. Tubeza

Lack of compliance

Seek Congress probe

Found in Swiss banks

Escudero still not convinced on poll automation





Crime victims' kin back Senate bill on grant of pardon

By Philip C. Tubeza

Dysfunctional

Sound judgment





Bill grants OFWs claims insurance

By Leila B. Salaverria

Showdown in House: Nograles vows to block con-ass measure

Halt demolitions during crisis, labor groups ask

Renato E. Galera; 52

Fireworks seen in Senate caucus on probe of Villar

By Christian O. Avendaño

SENATE MINORITY Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. will seek a revamp of the Senate ethics committee under Sen. Panfilo Lacson at today's all-member Senate caucus.

A senator, who asked not to be identified, said there could be fireworks at today's caucus as a heated exchange was expected between the majority and minority blocs over the Senate ethics committee's bid to start its probe of the ethics complaint filed by Sen. Jamby Madrigal against Sen. Manuel Villar.

Today's caucus was agreed upon by the senators last week after Pimentel took the floor to question the ethics committee's issuance of an amended order directing Villar to respond to allegations of double-funding for a road project that allegedly benefited his real estate company.

5 days to answer

Pimentel and other minority senators were irked that the order was issued without deliberations.

Last week, the ethics committee decided to give Villar five days to answer the complaint.

In a phone interview, Pimentel said he hoped his colleagues would heed his call that the ethics committee "should never engage in unethical conduct like violating its own rules."

He said the "fine-dancing" thing he would raise today was the need for a revamp of the ethics committee and that Lacson, "out of delicadeza should let go of the chairmanship."

Two sides

Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said he would allow both sides to defend their respective positions and propose resolutions in today's caucus.

Zubiri, who signed the amended order, said he did so out of a ministerial duty so that the order or committee report would come up for discussion.

"We hope to try to resolve this internally," he said in a phone interview.

Nothing irregular

For his part, Lacson said the ethics committee neither committed anything irregular nor violated its own rules.

He also said he would deliver a privilege speech today to defend the committee's action of ordering Villar to answer allegations on the double-funding.

Lacson said he had obtained permission from Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile to deliver his privilege speech prior to the senators' caucus.

Draft order

"Everyone will fall flat on their faces," he said in a phone interview, in reference to senators who castigated him for the ethics committee's issuance of its amended order directing Villar to respond to the complaint filed by Madrigal.

Lacson said he would not heed the demand for him to inhibit himself or give up the position of chair of the ethics committee.

Deceived

"Their premise is wrong and in the process, they have misled and deceived our peers," he said.

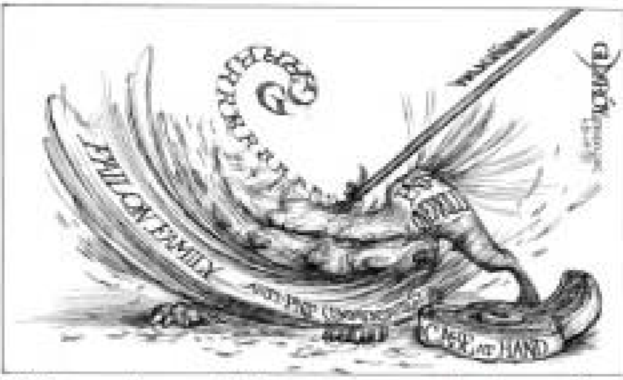
Lacson explained that what was circulated for signatures was not a committee report or resolution, but a draft order notifying the personal counsel of the Senate that the ethics complaint against Villar was sufficient in form and substance and that he should answer the complaint in five days.

Lacson said this was all in accordance with Senate rules.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
OPINION

Forgotten hostages

EDITORIAL



Police action on Failon case a warning to media

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

Obstruction of decency

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

Coming constitutional issues

Sounding Board



Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

The lame-ducking of Gen. Alexander Yano

Reveille



Ramon J. Farolan

American socialist in the Philippines

Commentary

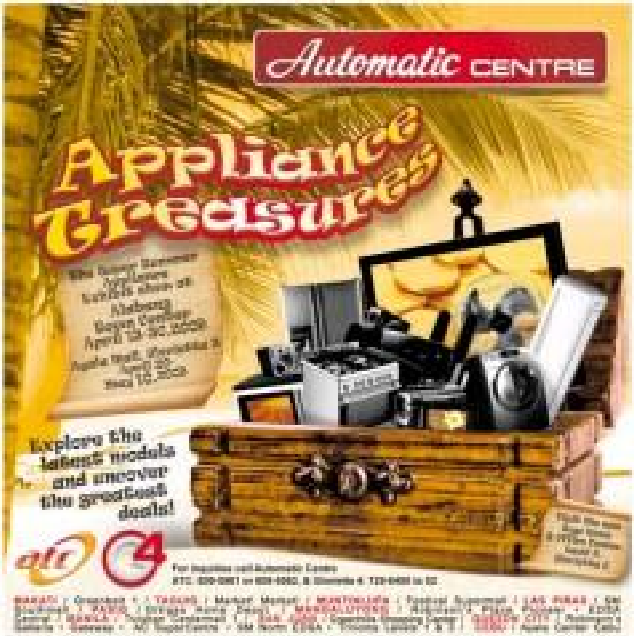
Roland G. Simbulan

Head hunting

The Long View



Manuel L. Quezon III



Let 2010 aspirants pass PWET test first

Rumors have no place in Biz Buzz





Across the NATION

DOJ: Ceza may give licenses to jai alai operators

THE CAGAYAN ECONOMIC Zone Authority's (Ceza) may operate or grant licenses to operators of jai alai, according to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Top SBMA execs post bail on golf takeover case

EARTH DAY 2009

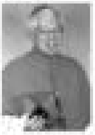
"Earth Survival: Climate Change Solutions"



MALACAÑAN PALACE



Fr. Neri Satur Award for Environmental Heroism



PGMA launches 'carbon cutting coalition'



Strengthened environment laws inspire advocates



DEAD MANGROVES

3 ex-immigration officials charged with graft

SC fires Tacloban clerk of court

Red tape turns Baguio into garbage city again

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

100 tons of garbage mounting in city near Clark ecozone



'RED TIDE' MENACE

Livelihood alternatives for fisherfolk offered

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LOCATION map of Sorsogon Bay



Big cooperative files complaint vs Legacy

1,000 gov't troops ring Abu Sayyaf stronghold in Sulu

12,000 cops, soldiers bought Legacy plans

Letter from detained colonel

'Not as lucky and quick'

Notter was suddenly alone

GMA won't take credit

Whistle-blowers pin hopes on 2010 polls



BARREDO



DOBLE



MADRIAGA

Threats

Hit hardest

Food business

Offer of settlement

Angry at Velarde

Lengthy reflection

Moral support

Ex-vigilantes linked officials to slays—CHR

Fear for their lives

A myth

Challenge accepted

Money talks

Remittances slump a slow-burning fuse

GDP going down

Worsening unemployment

Exacerbating tensions



28 RP nuns seek help from quake-torn Italy

To the rescue

Overjoyed

Safe and relocated

Issue documents

'Scuba rice' grows in flood-prone areas

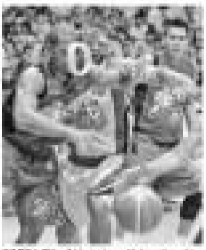
Retains taste, texture

1 to 2 tons more

Pioneering farm

REALTORS TRIUMPH

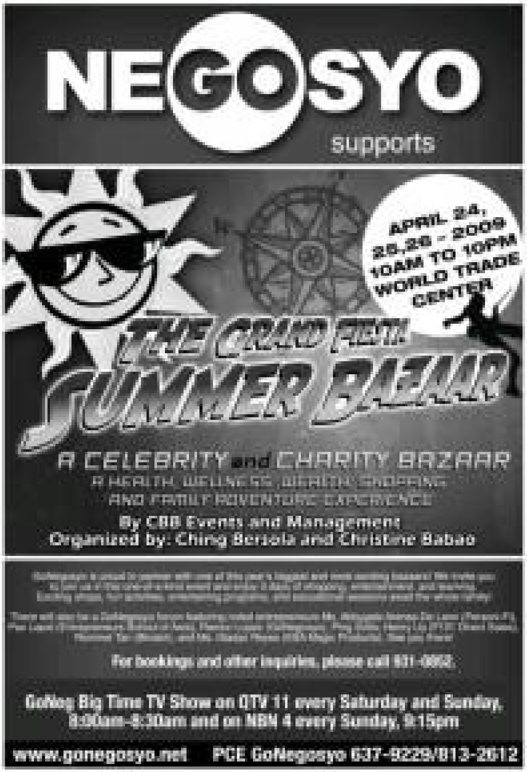
Aces turn back streaking Giants

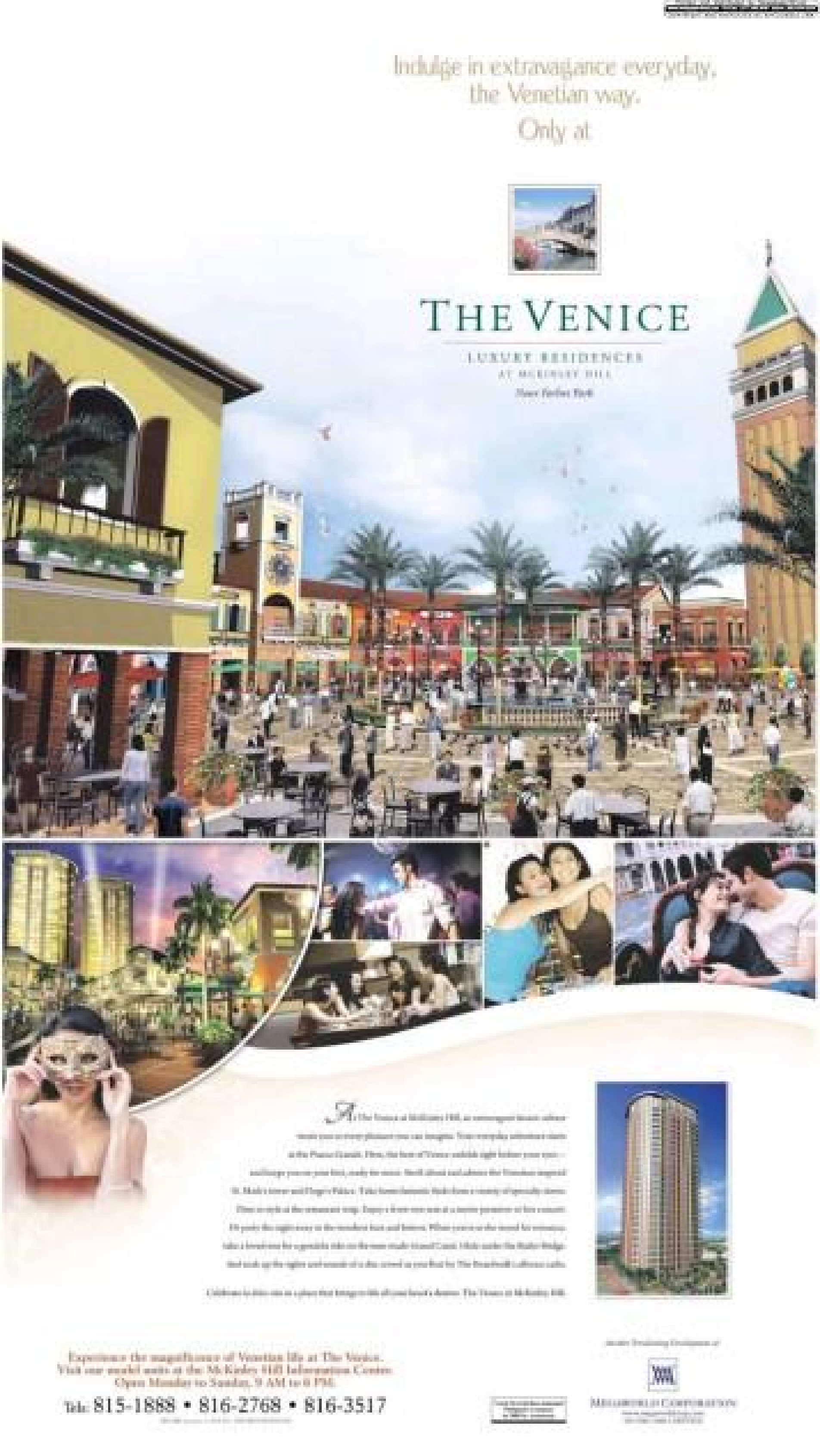




Day of knockouts for RP







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A plus METRO
Editor: Abelardo S. Ulanday



5-VEHICLE SMASHUP ON QUEZON AVENUE

10 hurt in multiple collision in QC

TEN PEOPLE WERE HURT IN A FIVE-VEHICLE SMASHUP AT THE corner of Quezon and Araneta Avenues in Quezon City at around 7 a.m. yesterday.

[illegible]

Chain reaction

[illegible]





Billiards group official shot dead in apartment

By Nancy C. Carvajal

Indian trader killed, wife wounded

By Jeannette I. Andrade

Possible motives

MetroBriefs

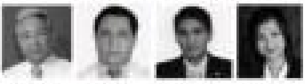
Pasay barangay chair charged

Fetus found in Sta. Mesa church

Makati joins Earth Day parade



TOUR OF THE FIREFLIES



Dr. Dacanay Dr. Valera Dr. Uriti Dr. Lacson



BEGGARS TURN OVERPASS INTO TOILET

Citizen's call

Inconsiderate bus drivers

Street corner is a jeep terminal

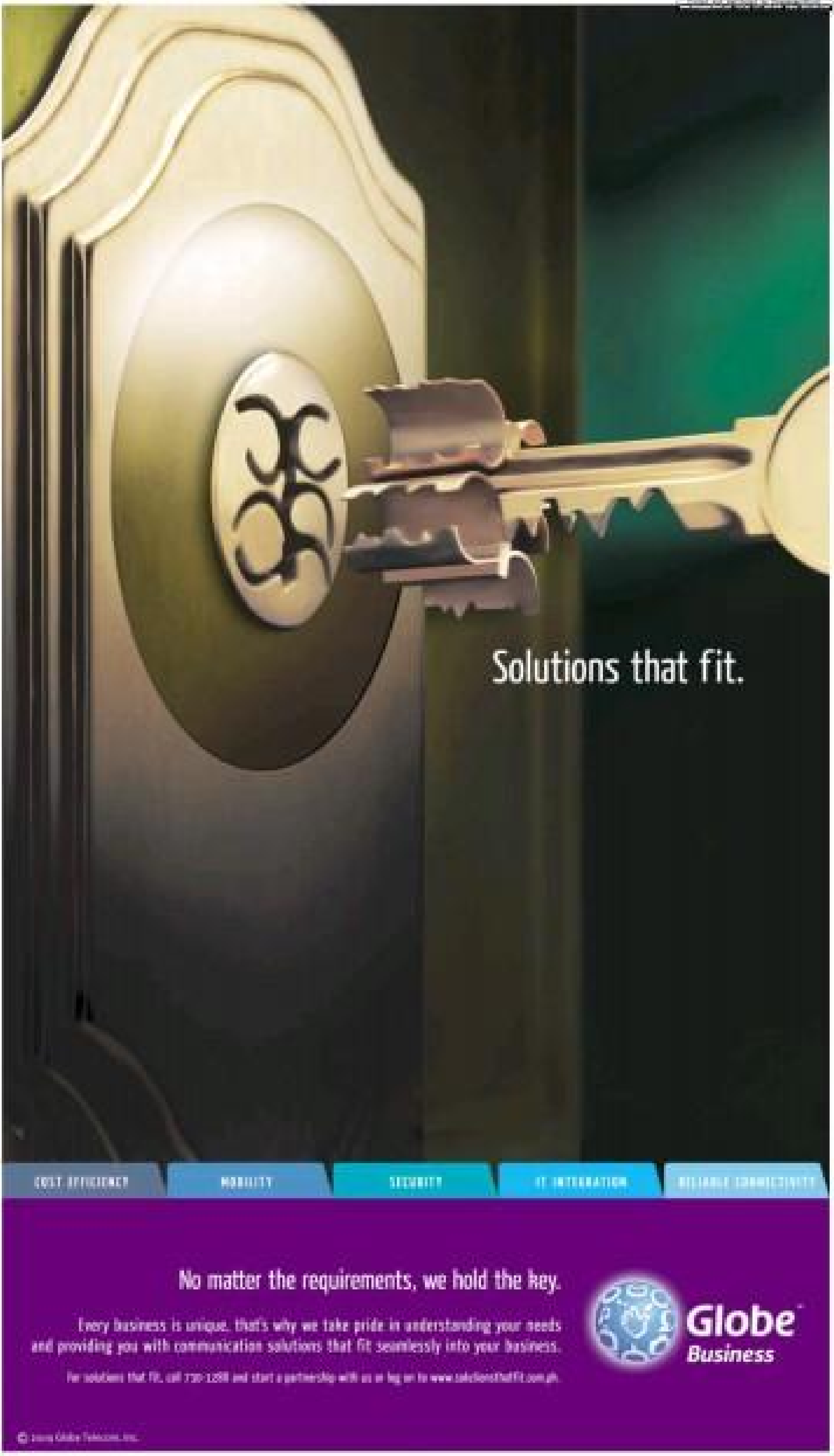
Unsightly political streamers

Dump trucks cause heavy traffic

Enforce smoking ban in mall

Personalized lampposts?

Kudos to patient CSC worker



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Globe Business

Shoot first: Columbine changed US police tactics

WorldBriefs

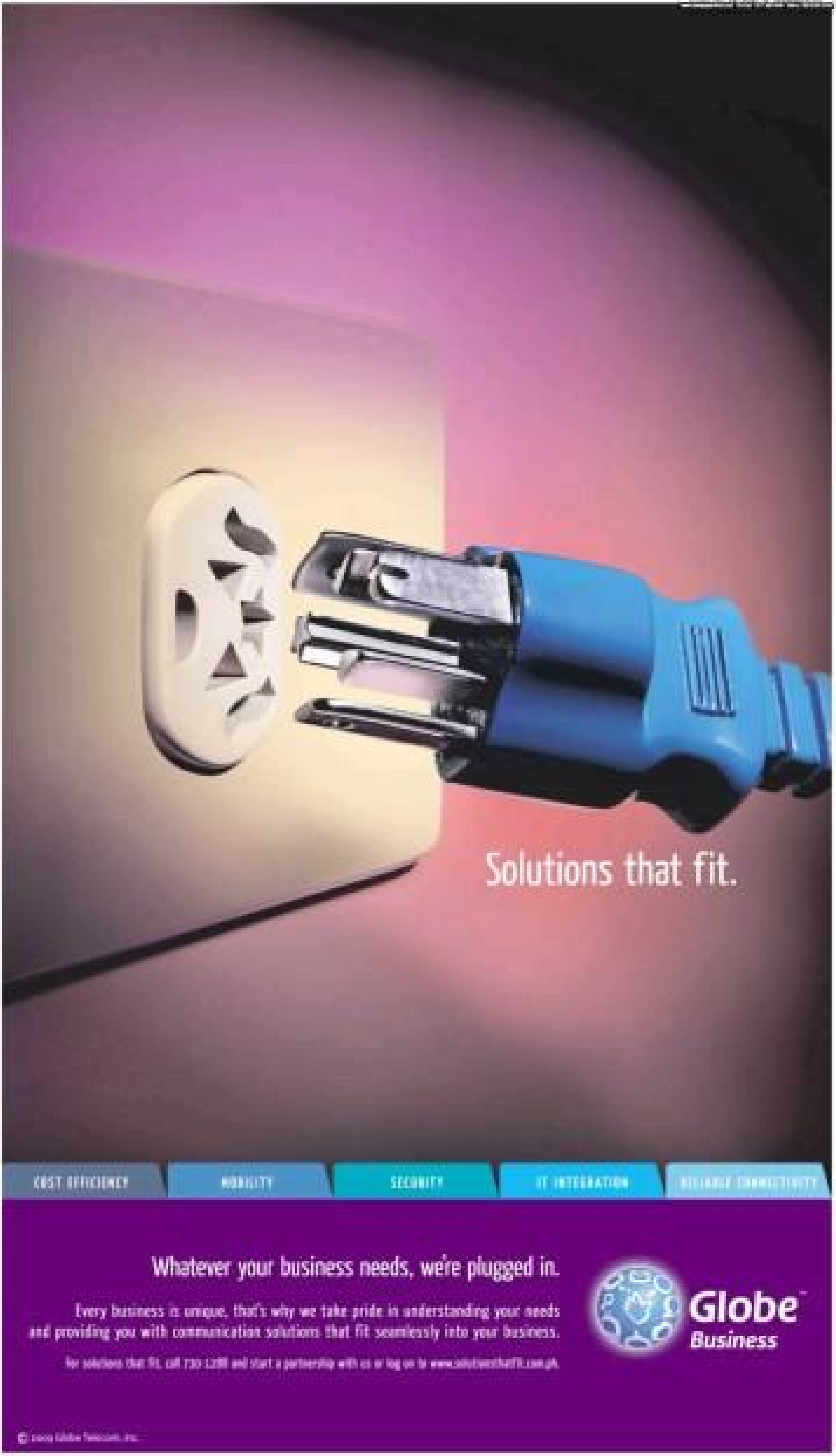
Bomber hits checkpoint in Pakistan, killing 20

Iran sentences American reporter to 8 years in prison

ETA military leader arrested in France



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Business

The WORLD

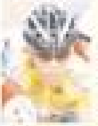
Obama administration to boycott UN racism meet

WASHINGTON—THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION will boycott "with regret" a UN conference on racism next week over objectionable language in the meeting's final document that could single out Israel for criticism and restrict free speech, the State Department said on Saturday.

Nato frees 20 hostages; pirates seize Belgian ship

CIA officials ordered unnecessary torture of al-Qaida figure



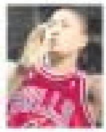


WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Guevarra tows 7-Eleven/Road Bike to P500,000 team title**/A35

SPORTS

■ **Bulls nip Celtics in overtime** /A36



Viloria battles back to regain world title

By Marc Anthony Reyes



[illegible]

Arum says Donaire now ready for the 'big guys'

By Marc Anthony Reyes

[illegible]

Cebu Niños send Liga Finals to KO game

Arum says Donaire ...

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

AdU, UST spikers pull thru



Viloria battles back ...

Illam batters clinch 3 more Series crowns

Room for improvement in equestrian

CLEAN LIVING



Callaway JW qualifier gets going at S'woods

Dela Rosa seeks NCA title repeat

Guevarra caps victory

Helps 7-Eleven/Road Bike to ₱500,000 team title



MARK Guevarra (in yellow jersey) pedals to victory with his 7-Eleven/Road Bike teammates.

Comprehensive 5-0 rout blasts RP booters' bid

SPORTS WATCH

Tennis, beach volley in focus

Tough Makati 5-cocker today

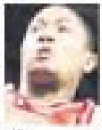
San Juan derby s'finals unfold

SPORTS

Bulls nip Celtics

Rookie Rose sparks playoff opener upset











Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Clarrie B. Martinez

BUSINESS

Maynilad, Manila Water scrap rate hike plans

Ayala firm gets 15-year contract extension

By Riza T. Olchondra

WATER RATES IN METRO MANILA WILL NO longer be increased—at least for this year.

Manila Water Co. Inc. has obtained government approval for a 15-year contract extension that would allow the company to forego water rate increases in the east zone of Metro Manila this year, newly appointed company president Rene Almendras said.

Maynilad, the operator of the west zone, has also been directed by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System to use the gains from a stronger peso to offset plans to increase its water rates for 2009.

"MWSS approved our proposal close Friday afternoon. But it's not final yet because it would have to be endorsed to (the Department of Finance) and then arrangements will be made to finalize a new contract," Manila Water's Almendras said.

He said there had been previous discussions with finance officials regarding MWSS's proposed extension.

The longer recovery period is expected to enable the company to increase its investment by 140 percent to P450 billion until 2037 from the originally approved budget of P187 billion until 2022.

An official of the MWSS confirmed that the agency approved Manila Water's proposed extension on Friday.

During public consultations in March, the publicly listed unit of the Ayala group said the extension would allow the company to trim scheduled water rate increases between 2010 and 2012 to P1 a cubic meter a year. There will be no rate increase this year.

The company was supposed to raise water rates by more than P2 a year from 2009 to 2012 under the existing contract that ends in 2022.

Besides allowing lower water rate adjustments while ensuring investment recovery, the extension of Manila Water's concession to 2037 would also result in more jobs created and more income for the government, Almendras said.

Almendras said Manila Water's investments have so far created 17,000 jobs a year and this figure would increase to 21,000 jobs annually because of the bigger investments to be made.

Government revenue is also estimated to reach P158 billion over an extended period until 2037, compared with P62 billion in taxes and concession fees to be paid if the company's concession ends in 2022.

Manila Water services about five million customers in the east zone of Metro Manila, which comprises Makati, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Marikina, most parts of Quezon City, some parts of Manila, San Juan, Taguig and Pateros. It also covers cities and

CONTINUED ON B2

IN THIS ISSUE

- **DA unit backs** development of biotech sector /B3
- **Megaworld offering** P58 in shares to stockholders /B4
- **Traders want** to remove cap on PSE ownership /B5
- **Exporters** press need for gov't aid /B10

INQUIRER

CURRENCIES



STOCK MARKET

Stocks seen trading with bullish bias



LOCAL STOCKS ARE SEEN to trade with a bullish bias for the third consecutive week as global investors cheer positive surprises on earnings recently posted by big American banks.

Last week, the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange index rose 1 percent to end the week at 2,054.13.

Joseph Roxas, president of local stockbrokerage Eagle Equities Inc., said the index could test 2,200 to 2,300 this week especially now that first quarter corporate results for the financial sector were beating market expectations.

He added that investors might find a lot of local stocks undervalued. "Their prices are low not because of their fundamentals but all because of this global crisis," he said.

"Stocks are expected to remain bullish for the medium term even though they are overbought for the very near term. There could be some profit-taking in the coming sessions as we approach the psychological 2,100 resistance level," AB Capital Securities said in its weekly commentary.

AB Capital said there was room to back it gains since share prices had gained by as much as 26 percent from the March 11 lows. It said bullish trends could persist until May or even early June.

"We may no longer see another major selloff but we remain cautious in calling a start of a bull market. Instead, we could be seeing some base-building as the global recovery is likely to be slow and feeble. Support for the index is the 2,000 level while resistance is at the one-year average of 2,202," it said. *Doris C. Dumlao*

BSP seen cutting policy rates further

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas is seen to continue easing its key policy rates by up to 50 basis points more as current government projections of domestic growth are still too optimistic, according to DBS Bank Ltd.

In a report dated April 17, DBS said it believed the BSP could decrease its overnight borrowing and lending rates twice by 25 basis points.

On Thursday, the central bank's policymaking Monetary Board announced it had cut the rates further by 25 basis points to 4.5 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively.

The latest rates cut brought the cumulative reduction in both policy rates to 150 basis points since December last year.

Thursday's move was the second time in a row that the rates were slashed by a quarter percentage point. Before that, the BSP cut the rates by 50 points or half a percentage point.

DBS said at least one more installment of 25 basis points could be expected although BSP officials avoided saying explicitly that further reductions were in the offing.

In fact, BSP Deputy Governor Diwa C. Guinigundo said on Thursday it was "hard to tell" and "difficult to judge at this point" whether the monetary authority will be ending the series of rate reductions.

SEE B2

Gokongwei firm to open Tagaytay hotel next month

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOKONGWEI BORDEN Land Corp. is set to open next month a 100-room hotel called "Summit Ridge" in Tagaytay City, the fourth member of its hotel portfolio.

The property developer has also firmed up plans to launch by next year a budget hotel chain called "Go Hotel," which seeks to capitalize on the synergies with affiliate budget carrier Cebu Pacific Air, RLC president Frederick Go said in an interview.

"The one in Tagaytay, I think it will be a successful hotel. It has the most commanding ridge view of Taal Volcano and it's nearest to the lake," Go said.

The pilot site for the Go Hotel chain, on the other hand, is in Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City. It will occupy two floors of the Robinsons Cybergate Plaza and offer 220 rooms in budget-conscious travelers.

"It's a budget hotel chain which we think will do well especially because we can have an alliance with Cebu Pacific which is the largest budget airline. There is similarity between the markets they serve," Go said.

In its fiscal year ending September 2008, the hotels division accounted for P1.34 billion or about 13 percent of total revenues. The group's revenue last year went up 12 percent from a year ago.

The three other existing hotels in RLC's portfolio are the 285-room Holiday Inn in Pasig City, 263-room Crowne Plaza in Quezon City and 213-room Cebu Midtown Hotel. These hotels reported a respective occupancy rate of 79 percent, 75 percent and 53 percent in 2008.

Bioethanol producer gets ₱100-M credit line from DBP

Funding for feedstock, chemicals

DTI weighs impact of zero-tariff extension

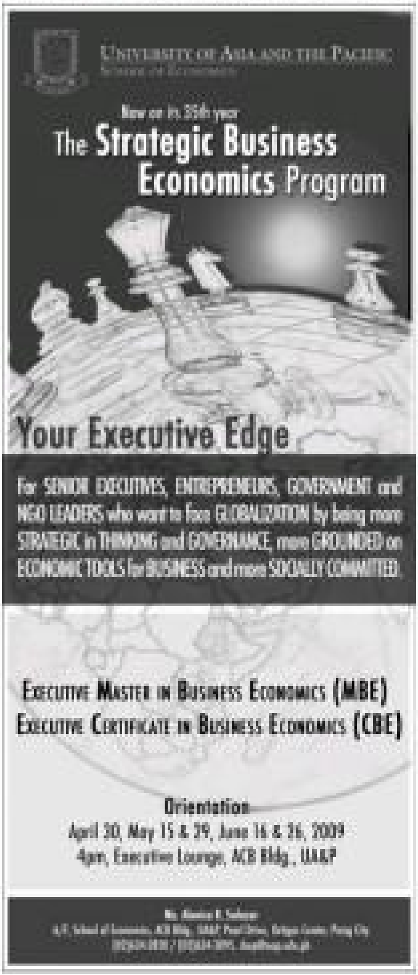
Listening to the poor

NO FREE LUNCH



Cielito F. Habito

Maynilad ...



DA unit backs development of biotech sector

[illegible]

Petron projects higher Q1 income in '09

[illegible]

PHILEX MINING CORPORATION

Philex Building, No. 27 Brixton Street, Pasig City
Tel Nos. 631-1381 to 88

Notice of Special Meeting of Stockholders

TO OUR STOCKHOLDERS:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a special meeting of the stockholders of PHILEX MINING CORPORATION will be held on **Tuesday, April 21, 2009** at 2:00 pm at the **Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Ortigas Avenue corner ADB Avenue, Quezon City**. The order of business thereat will be as follows:

1. Proof of required notice of the meeting
2. Proof of the presence of a quorum
3. Amendment of Article Seventh of the Articles of Incorporation to increase Authorized Capital Stock from P5,000,000,000 to P8,000,000,000
4. Declaration of 25% Stock Dividend

For the purpose of the meeting, only stockholders of record at the close of business on February 25, 2009 will be entitled to vote thereat. Please bring some form of identification, such as passport, driver's license, or company I.D. in order to facilitate registration, which will start at 12:30 noon.

Any stockholder who cannot attend the meeting in person and desires to be represented thereat is requested to date and sign the proxy enclosed herewith and mail it back using the return envelope. The proxy should be mailed in time so as to be received by the Corporate Secretary on or before Friday, April 17, 2009, which is the deadline for submission of proxies.

Proxy validation will commence on Wednesday, April 15, 2009 at 10:00 am at the offices of Fidelity Stock Transfer, Inc. at the Ground Floor, Philex Building, 27 Brixton Street, Pasig City.

BARBARA ANNE C. MIGALLOS
Corporate Secretary

Megaworld offering ₱5B in shares to stockholders

Part of firm's fund-raising plan

GMA Network pays ₱1.1B in income tax

URC to rationalize capex, trim working capital

NOTICE

Traders want to remove cap on PSE ownership

By Doris C. Dumlao

STOCK BROKERS WANT TO remove a provision in the Securities Regulation Code (SRC) that requires them to trim their collective voting rights in the demutualized Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) to 20 percent.

Law firm Quasha Ancheta Peña & Nolasco has advised the Philippine Association of Stock Brokers & Dealers Inc. (PASBDI) to petition the Supreme Court to declare Sec. 33.2 of the SRC "unconstitutional" and compel the Securities and Exchange Commission to remove the provision that limits stock brokers' ownership of the local bourse to 20 percent.

In a memorandum to brokers, association chair and veteran stockbroker [illegible] the PASBDI board had already agreed to pursue the law firm's recommendation.

Expenses for this initiative was estimated at P3.5 million. PASBDI proposed to cover the costs through funding assistance from the PSE and contributions from the 132 active trading members of the association.

PASBDI's legal counsel argued that the 20-percent ownership limit was in conflict with another SRC provision allowing 49 percent of the PSE board to be held by brokers.

The PSE used to be owned by brokers until it was reorganized and demutualized, or converted from a nonstock membership organization to a shareholder-based stock corporation. By 2003, PSE shares were listed on its own bourse by way of introduction [illegible] ownership base.

As a result of the demutualization of the PSE, the ownership of brokers has been reduced from 100 percent in 2003 to only 38 percent as of end-November last year.

Since brokers still own more than 20 percent of the voting rights of PSE, the SEC ordered PSE to comply with the limit imposed under the Securities Regulation Code. The SEC had deferred the implementation of this requirement for now.

InfoTech

ASPIRE TIMELINE

Thin, light, long-lasting



SAFE behind plastic casement, Acer's Aspire Timeline notebook is presented for the first time.

Text and photo
by Charles E. Buban

WHEN MACBOOK Air was launched last year, this laptop from Apple inspired the almost unparalleled marvel with its 1.3-kilogram weight and its super slim profile 19 mm thick at its thinnest and only 19 mm thick at its portliest).

But it didn't take long for the rest of the competition to realize the potential of Apple's highly appealing concept. In fact, one firm came up with its own revolution.

Acer, the world's third-biggest computer maker, unveiled its Aspire Timeline series of notebooks that boast not only of a similarly light weight and slim profile but also of a battery that could last for more than eight hours on a single charge. This is much longer than MacBook Air's 2.5 hours.

Three variants

Available in three variants: a 15.6-inch, 2.4-kg model; 14-inch, 1.9-kg, and a 13.3-inch, 1.6-kg (MacBook air is available only in 13.3-inch model). The Timeline indeed achieved the delicate equilibrium between computer lightness and long battery life.

"The bane of most laptop users is the lack of a really long battery life. There's no denying the value of longer battery life because to be truly empowered, users want their laptops to run all day without requiring a recharge," said Acer chair JT Wang during last week's launch in Beijing, China.

So, how did Acer achieve this breakthrough?

The secret, according to Wang, is the use (in Timeline series) of Intel Core 2 Duo ultra low voltage line of processors along with Intel's display power savings technology that can reduce the backlight level.

40 percent

The combination allows the battery to last 40 percent longer (Intel DPST alone achieve savings of up to 33 percent energy compared to typical notebooks).

The Timeline series also has the Acer Smart Power key that extends battery life through advanced settings.

"Just press the Smart Power key to boost power saving capabilities and extend battery life, thus expanding your time of freedom by more than eight hours," said Wang.

Another breakthrough in the Timeline notebooks is the cooling technology, which was developed in collaboration with Intel.

Jet engine technology

Intel's famous cool jet technology is like the cooling technology used in today's jet engines. Through the addition of louvers to the inlet vents, the cooling air flow is redirected to the bottom of the notebook chassis, pushing fresh air where it's needed to keep cool for the skin.

With the technology, a user would no longer have to put up with a scalding hot piece of notebook on his lap, Wang said.

The Timeline series is equipped with next generation DDR3 memory that makes multitasking a breeze, and provides hard disk storage capacity of up to 500 GB (there is also support for solid state drive for up to 64 GB of capacity).

Popularly priced

The Timeline series, which will be introduced in the local market within the second quarter, will carry a price tag of between $899 and $999 (or P53,400 and P45,000).

"Indeed, we have exceeded our market's many expectations and at the same time, lead our competitors by six to nine months," he said.

He said that in two years, notebooks that are thin and light and with an eight-hour battery life will represent about 50 percent of the total notebook market.

Wang is confident that with a healthy sales figures expected with the Timeline series as well as Acer's Aspire One series of low-cost netbooks, the company may well overtake its closest competitor (Hewlett-Packard Co.) as the largest notebook-computer vendor before its 2011 target.

Chronicle your summer travels with this smart phone

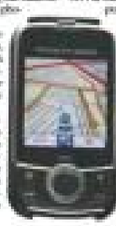
By Raquel P. Gomez

SMART PHONES are increasingly getting "smarter" by the day, literally.

Take the new HTC Touch Cruise phone, it can identify the places you've been to in the course of your travel by automatically putting the location names on the photographs taken with the phone's camera.

So, photographs taken by the phone's digital camera details the specific geographical location through its built-in GPS (Global Positioning System), a feature that enables the phone to identify the precise coordinates of any location.

HTC officials call this smart phone feature "Footprints." According to them, the HTC Touch Cruise is the first mobile phone that enables users to chronicle their travels personally by "adding the exact location" on the photographs.



Once a photograph is taken, the HTC Touch Cruise automatically attaches the place name to the saved file.

Also, Footprints allows the user to add more details to the picture taken, for example, if the place is a restaurant, details like name, address, telephone numbers, and even the sound clip of the environment can be added.

Another feature of the HTC Touch Cruise is that it can serve as an advanced in-car navigation system. Just place the phone into its accompanying car cradle and the user can take advantage of its GPS navigation system. A clear female robotic voice coming from the phone's speakers will provide directions while the user is driving. The phone even tells the driver in advance how far the vehicle is from the destination or when to turn a corner or intersection.

The HTC Touch Cruise also features the TouchFLO technology that runs on top of the Windows Mobile 6.1 operating system. It runs on Qualcomm processor (528 MHZ) and has a discrete graphics accelerator. It is also a 3.5 G device (HSDPA 7.2 Mbps), has a micro SD port for expansion, Bluetooth 2.0 with EDR (enhanced data rate) and A2DP for stereo wireless headsets, and Wi-Fi feature. The phone's digital camera provides 3.2 megapixel resolution.

Suggested retail price for this super smart phone is P31,900 and comes with 1 GB micro SD card.

Chikka expands text offerings

By Abigail L. Ho

HOMEGROWN APPLICATION service provider Chikka is expanding its range of text offerings by filing more patent applications for new technologies.

According to the company, it currently has 11 patent filings, 54 granted patents and more than 40 pending approval. These patents and filings are all for mobile communications technologies spanning 24 countries.

Among the technologies that Chikka has patented is the "speed suffixing" application that the company used in its flagship service Chikka Text Messenger.

For messages sent via Chikka, recipients will notice that a unique number series, usually a mobile phone number, will be affixed at the end of the operator short code for the messaging service.

This system-generated suffix is used to identify particular sessions, in this case, messaging between two Chikka users.

With suffixing, mobile users can easily reply to Chikka text messages like any other regular text messages. There is no need to apply extra steps or use additional keywords, as well as no need to reveal to an access code.

Apart from the speed suffixing function, Chikka has also patented a "unified account" that allows users of the Chikka service to enter their mobile number as their PC log-in ID.

This results in a unified mobile and instant messaging account that enables users to receive and reply to IM messages as text messages, even when they do not have access to a PC.

According to Chikka, the Unified Account is among the earliest patents granted by the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore. This particular technology has also been awarded patents from other countries that are signatories to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

"Chikka has invested in building a patent portfolio around these methods and processes that are deemed innovative and pose huge commercial potential," Chikka chief executive Chito Bustamante said in a statement. "Chikka, which we launched in 2000, is one of the first, if not the first, commercially successful integration of web and mobile technologies."

Chikka provides various mobile applications to more than 30 mobile operators in 17 countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and India.

It develops not only applications for mobile devices, but also for consumer and corporate needs.

Keeping people online in summer hotspots



INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

BSP seen cutting policy rates further

From page B1

"This will depend on the movement of inflation, liquidity and demand for liquidity," Ocampo said.

For his part, BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr. said the Monetary Board, in coming up with its decision last week, noted that while there were initial signs of improvement in the global financial system, the restoration to normalcy could take some time.

Tetangco added that the BSP would continue to carefully monitor global and domestic developments with a view to ensuring that local monetary policy stance remained appropriate.

URC ...

From page B4

... the bond to us," Sebastian said.

However, when interest rates are on the decline, it makes more sense for investors to look to gains and wait for the bonds to mature.

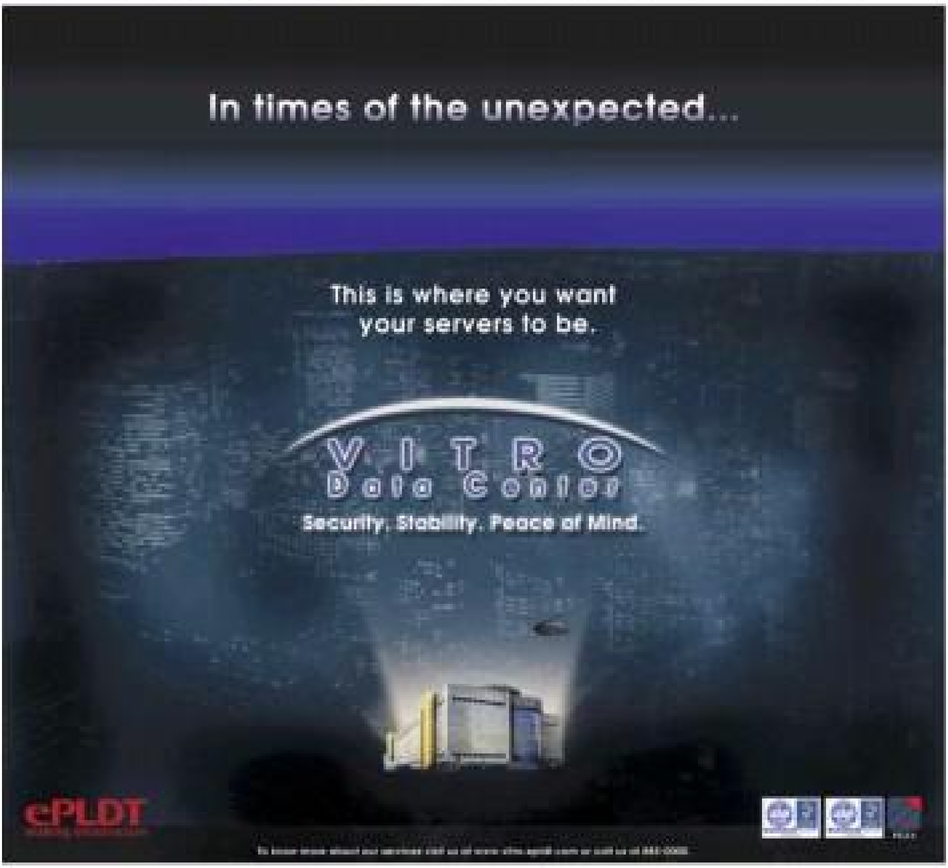
Business

Exporters press need for government aid

Council yet to release P1-B Export Promotion Fund



EDC to extend reach in geothermal sector



Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
Arts and Books Editor Lito B. Zulueta

LIFESTYLE Arts & Books





Julian Schnabel art show coming to Manila

The American superstar painter and Oscar-nominated director may yet come to the country where he's lionized by younger generations of artists and art students

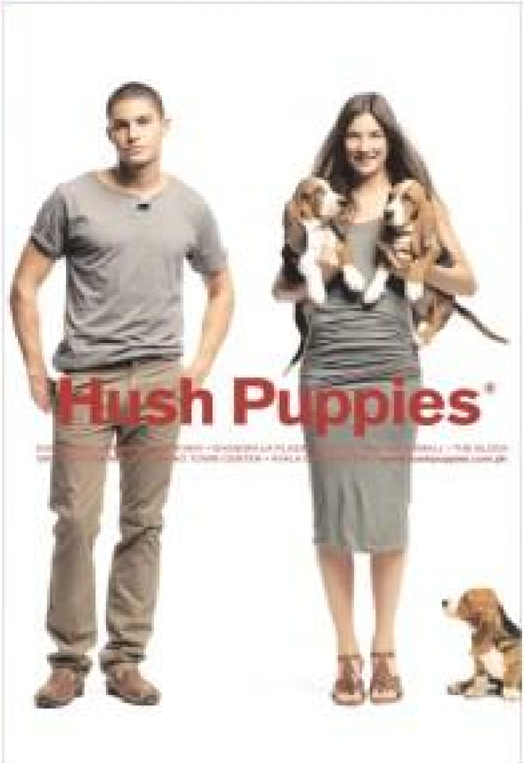
By Lito B. Zulueta

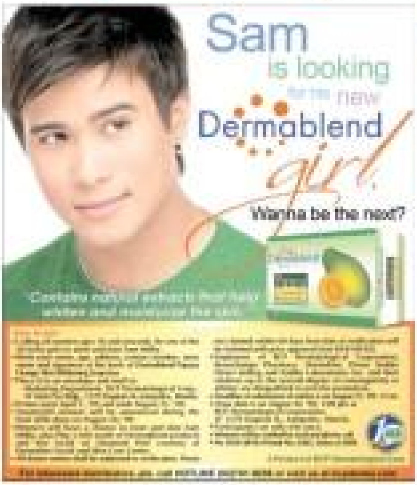
FILIPINOS WILL finally get the chance to see for themselves what the rage in the art world is all about when "Recent Works by Julian Schnabel" comes to Manila on June 13-July 6 at Manila Contemporary, the dynamic art space in Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati, put up by regional art maven Valentine Willie.

"Recent Works" ends its inaugural Singapore run today at the Art Space at Helutrans, a ware-



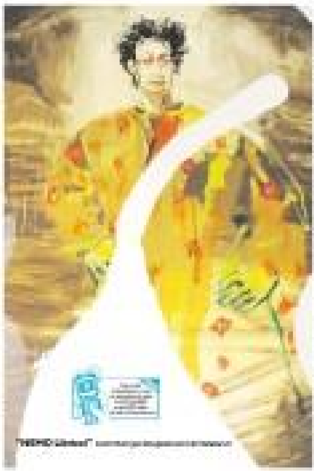








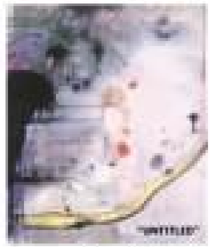
Julian Schnabel art show coming . . .





JULIAN Schnabel





"UNTITLED"

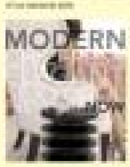
'Green Light' auction at Podium on April 22











Top panelists named in UST criticism, film workshops

What's at stake in Santa Ana, Manila



TRUE to the ethnic diversity of the neighborhood, on a narrow side street is a Taoist temple.



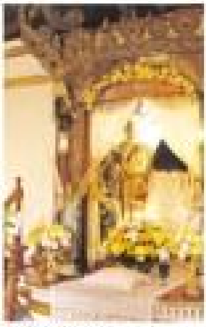
PLAZA Hugo, an unknown gem of Manila open space in Santa Ana.

PRIDE OF PLACE



Augusto F. Villalon

New development must maintain and even enhance neighborhood feel



THE CAMARIN behind the main altar of Santa Ana church is a religious treasure.

Talk on church heritage accord

Days of books and roses at Instituto Cervantes

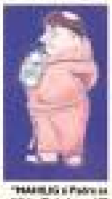


April 24

April 25

Visual Arts

Illustrators at UP Vargas



Robles, Garibay in Singapore

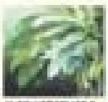


ARTWORKS by Pinno Robles and Manny Garibay

Langenegger at Finale



San Pedro at Ricco Renzo



"AQUASCIENCE," by Rudy San Pedro

Aquarelle in Baguio



Young artists at Paseo

‘Songs for a New World’ opens May 1

9 WORKS THEATRICAL, Manila's newest theater company, presents the musical off-Broadway musical "Songs for a New World" at the Carlos P. Romulo Theatre, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, on May 1-3, 8-10.

"Songs for a New World" is the brainchild of Tony Award-winning composer and lyricist Jason Robert Brown, who has been hailed as "one of Broadway's smartest and most sophisticated songwriters since Stephen Sondheim" (Philadelphia Inquirer), and "a leading member of a new generation of composers who embody high hopes for the American musical" (New York Times).

His musical theater hits include "Parade" (1999 Tony Award for Best Score, Drama Desk Award for Best Music), "The Last Five Years" (2002 Drama Desk Awards for Best Music and Best Lyrics, and nomination for Outstanding Orchestrations), "Urban Cowboy" (2003 Tony nomination for Best Original Score), "Wearing Someone Else's Clothes" (2005), Brown's solo debut album; and the latest, "13," which opened on Broadway in 2008.

Noted theater actor and director Robbie Guevara, co-founder and artistic director of 9 Works Theatrical, will direct the musical anew after a successful one-night run last August 24, 2008.

While originally written as a musical with a montage of songs or a "musical revue," the local staging will have Guevara reinterpreting the material by weaving the songs together in order to come up with a story.

"Songs for a New World" features some of the country's most talented theater actors: [illegible].

For tickets and inquiries, call [illegible]. Visit [illegible]

Creative writing workshop in Cebu

LITTLE BOY PRODUCTIONS is offering an intensive Creative Writing Workshop in Cebu this summer, to be led by Palanca award-winning writer and Ateneo de Manila University instructor Lawrence Ypil.

High school and college students, young professionals, and all lovers of the written word are invited to discover the art and craft of imaginative writing. The workshop aims to approach writing in a fun and imaginative way. No previous experience is required.

First Prize winner in the Poetry Category of the 2006 Palanca Awards, Ypil's poems and essays have been published in various publications both here and abroad. He teaches creative writing at the Ateneo de Manila University and is a regular panelist in many notable writing workshops all over the country.

He writes a regular column at Sun Star Weekend called [illegible], and his first book, "Highest Hiding Place," will be published by the Ateneo de Manila University Press later this year.

The Creative Writing Workshop will run for two weeks from April 27-May 8. The class will meet every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 2-3:30 p.m. at the old campus of Sacred Heart School-Jesuit on Mango Avenue, Cebu City. Workshop fee is P2,500.

For more information, call [illegible], or visit Little Boy Productions at [illegible], on Mango Avenue, Cebu City.

FROM BOOK TO FILM

'Pettigrew' seizes the day



FRANCES McDormand and Amy Adams, a charming duo

Quaint charmer

Bookstore holds 'Cre8tive' campaign

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor: Bernie S. Velarde





Cebuano transsexual's award-winning movie rocks



RAQUELA Rios with filmmaker Olaf de Fleur Johannesson

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WHEN CEBUANO TRANSsexual Raquela Rios first met Icelandic filmmaker Olaf de Fleur Johannesson online, she thought he was looking for romance, like she was. He gave her a movie role instead.

[illegible]

CEBUANO B3





ASHTON Kutcher on Larry King's CNN show

Hail, Twitter King Kutcher

NEW YORK—[illegible] ASHTON KUTCHER is the king of Twitter.

[illegible]

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X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE (MAY 1-3)

CINEMA 1

DRAGONBALL: EVOLUTION

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★★★★

★★★★

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Hail . . .

Cebuano transsexual's . . .

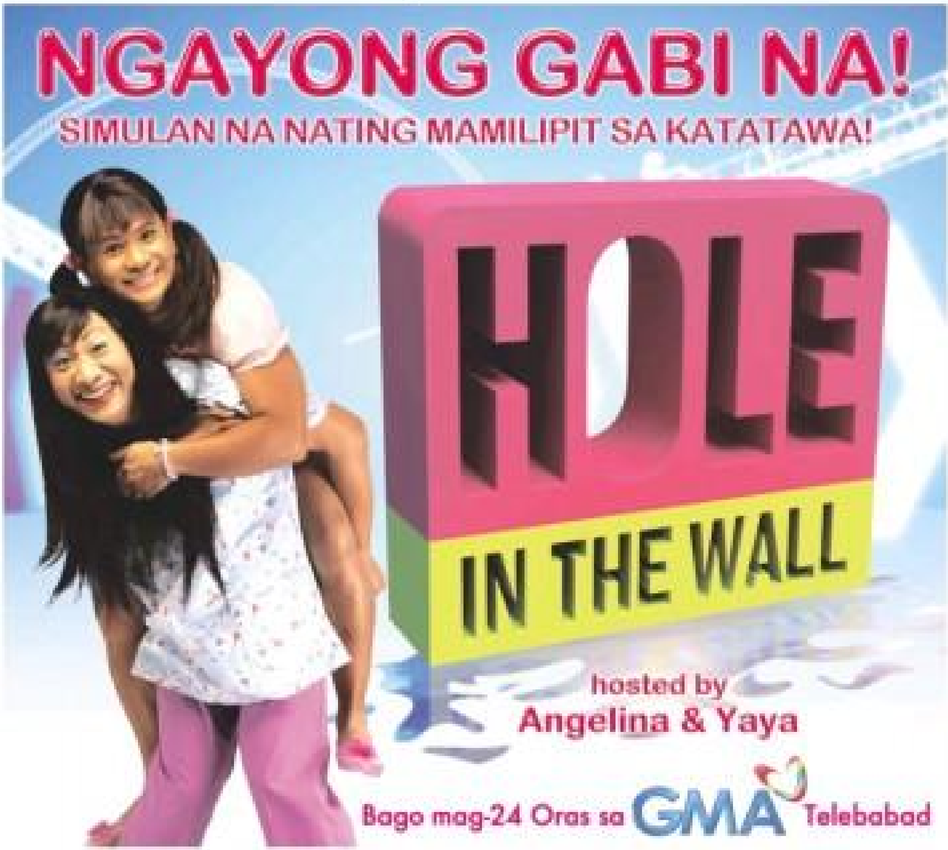
Understanding

Teaching





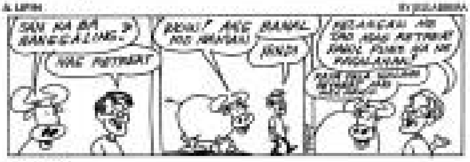




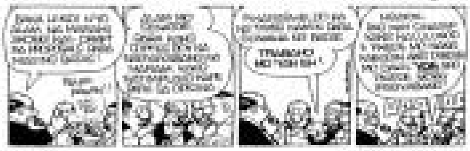
GARFIELD
By Jim Davis



A. LIPIN
By Jess Abrera



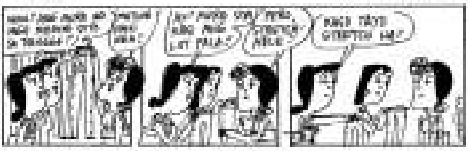
PUGAD BABOY
By Pol Medina Jr.



DICK TRACY



LOVESHOTS
By Elizabeth Chionglo



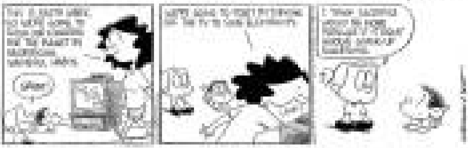
JAMES BOND



DIVINE COMEDY



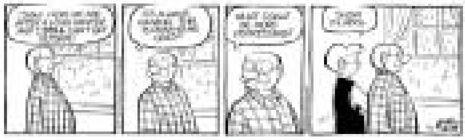
BABY BLUES
By Jerry Scott



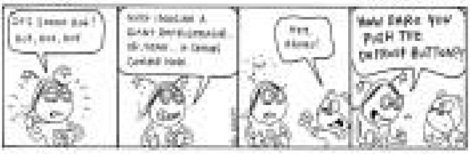
TULDOK



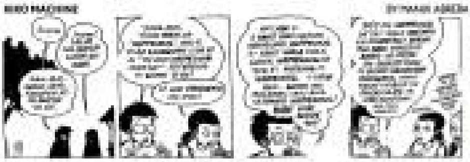
SIN
By Daniel Shelton



ATOMO AND WEBOT
By Lyra Garcellano

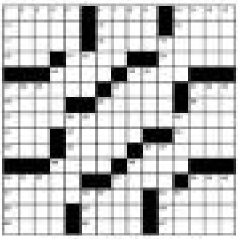


KIKO MACHINE
By Manix Abrera

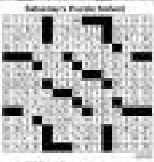


HOROSCOPE
By Francis Drake

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Saturday's Puzzle Solved



CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

6		7			8		5	
			5			4		6
5				1			2	
	6		2	4				5
		5	3		1	9		
3				7	5		4	
	5			8				9
2		1			3			
	4		1			7		8

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	5	9	1	6	3	2	4	7
1	6	7	9	4	2	3	5	8
4	3	2	5	8	7	1	6	9
2	1	3	7	5	4	8	9	6
9	4	5	6	2	8	7	1	3
7	8	6	3	9	1	5	2	4
3	9	1	2	7	6	4	8	5
5	2	4	8	3	9	6	7	1
6	7	8	4	1	5	9	3	2

Better late than later

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

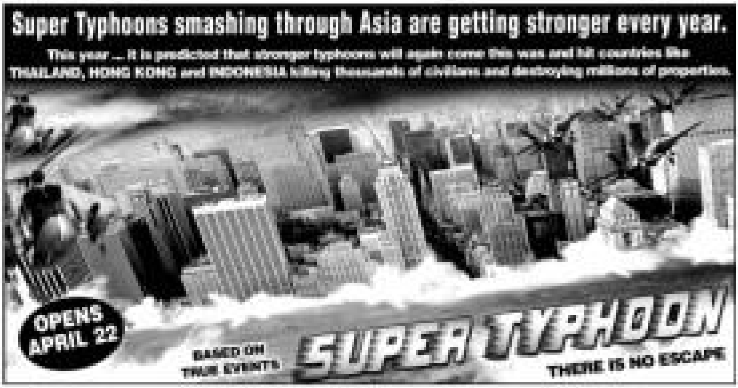


Feedback

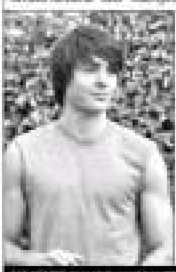








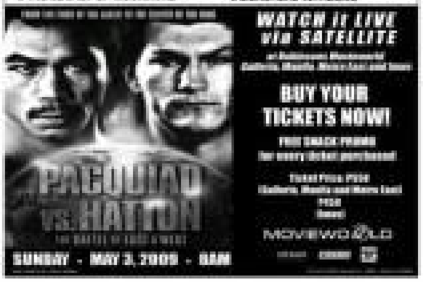
"17 AGAIN" #1 MOVIE in AMERICA!



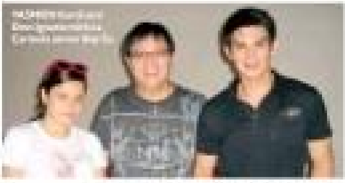








Aboard my second home



DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Anne Carvajal

Right recipe

No mercy

Surprise visit



Editor: Chelo Banal Formoso

LEARNING



Schools as tourist attractions

THE TOURISM Academy @ Sentosa holds some classes in this carefully preserved British facility in Singapore's beautiful island resort, which serves as a "laboratory" for tourism students.

Singapore has put together an impressive mix of educational institutions to draw long-term visitors

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

SINGAPORE WANTS YOU TO visit—for a few days or a few years. Already a major tourist draw for its food, shopping and natural and man-made attractions, the island state wants to bring in visitors who will stay a little longer than most travel schedules allow—at least a year longer.

Taste of the future



Playgrounds for the MIND

Member Schools

JRU-MPA Program's partnership with Mandaluyong City



PNU holds 101st commencement exercises



CHIEF JUSTICE PUNO KEYNOTES FEU LAW GRADUATION



PWU CITES ABS-CBN'S GRAND STAR DREAMER



FAITH HOLDS TALK ON POLITICAL ISSUES



CEU medical technology student ranks 7th in board exam



ALTA'S PERPSQUAD IS 4TH NATIONAL CHEERLEADING CHAMP



UP MANILA ELECTS NEW UNIVERSITY STUDENT COUNCIL



Training center for blind gets largest share of pledges

EUREKA! *Queena N. Lee-Chua*



Summer classes

Mathematics classes

Tutorials for ADD

Speech classes



Schools as tourist attractions

Lola and her 2 GI 'brothers'

By Gila Marie Jardinico

[illegible]

Adopted sons

[illegible]

Strange incident

[illegible]

Business students learn from US execs

[illegible]



ATENEO DE NAGA GETS VERY OWN SIM

[illegible]

Glimpses of past Assumption life

[illegible]





FASHIONISTA ASSUMPTIONISTA. [illegible]

WINNING essay in the Inquirer-Lyceum Writing Contest will be published on May 4, 2009.